



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food Safety
and Inspection
Service

Washington, D.C.
20250

OCT 1 2002

Mr. Peter Weber
Chief Veterinary Officer
Veterinary Services
Budeskanzleramt
Radetzkystrasse 2
A-1031 Wien
Austria

Dear Mr. Weber:

The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has completed an on-site audit of Austria's meat inspection program. The audit was conducted from March 12 through March 21, 2002. Austria's comments on the draft final audit report have been included as Attachment G. We have made various editorial corrections to the report in accordance with your comments. Enclosed is a copy of the final audit report. I apologize for the delay in providing this report to you.

The audit report describes a number of serious deficiencies that are similar to those found during the previous three audits of Austria's meat inspection system (May 1998, November 1999, and March 2000). At each of the exit conferences for these audits, Austrian inspection officials assured the auditor that appropriate and effective corrective actions would be taken to rectify the observed deficiencies. However, the deficiencies found during this most recent audit were so serious that both of Austria's certified establishments were delisted for export to the United States. In accordance with FSIS policy regarding establishments that are delisted prior to or during an audit, these establishments may not be relisted for export to the United States until FSIS has (1) received and reviewed the corrective actions that were taken by the Government of Austria and the individual establishments, and (2) conducted an on-site audit of the establishment(s) proposed for relistment.

If you have questions regarding the audit or need additional information, please contact me at 202-720-3781; facsimile at 202-690-4040, and electronic mail at sally.stratmoen@fsis.usda.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sally Stratmoen JD". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Sally Stratmoen
Chief, Equivalence Section
International Policy Staff
Office of Policy, Program Development
and Evaluation

Enclosure

cc:

Alejandro Checchi-Lang, European Commission, Brussels, Belgium
Robert Curtis, Minister-Counselor, U.S. Embassy, Vienna
Marcus Bertmann, Economic Counselor, Embassy of Austria, Washington, DC
Joerg Niederberger, Counselor (Agriculture), EU Mission to the US, Wash, DC
Norval Francis, Minister/Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, USEU/Brussels
Linda Swacina, Associate Administrator, FSIS
John Prucha, ADA, Program Coordination and Evaluation, OPPDE
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Amy Winton, State Department
Nancy Goodwin, ES, IPS
Country File-Austria (Audit FY 2002)